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California Policy Options

Title

Preface

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Preface

It is often said that California is a bellwether for the nation. Policy makers and business people habitually look to California to get a sense of what the future might look like -- a habit fostered by such factors as the state's increasingly globalized economy, its ethnically and racially diverse society, its entrepreneurial and innovative environment, and its growing household income and capital inequities. The often daunting challenge for policy makers in California -- whether on the local, regional or state level, in the public, corporate or non-governmental sectors -- is to stay ahead of the curve in the state that is often setting the agenda for the rest of the country.

The UCLA Anderson Forecast and the UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research's California Policy Options program work hand-in-hand to give policy makers a clear sense of what lies ahead during the coming year. The Forecast provides an expert prediction of what sort of economic performance we should expect in the short term. The Policy Options program, in contrast, provides over-the-horizon policy radar. Our program not only identifies critical policy issues state and local leaders will be likely to address in the months ahead but also provides a thoughtful and balanced analysis of those issues. The result, we believe, is a concise mix of information and analysis that will enable decision makers to anticipate, rather than react to, important public issues in the months ahead.

The following chapters address a wide range of issues, from the multimedia industry to welfare reform, worker training programs, and drug policy. This broad scope reflects not only the complex reality that is California today, but also the interdisciplinary mission and expertise of the School of Public Policy and Social Research. Founded in 1994 as the first new professional school at UCLA in over twenty-five years, the School is a leader in creating a new paradigm to policy education, research, and action. Our distinctive approach emphasizes solving problems across boundaries, whether those boundaries separate the private, non-profit or public sectors, political viewpoints, cultures, or countries. It is a mode of problem solving ideally suited to the challenges facing us in California today.

Barbara J. Nelson

Dean

UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research